

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**RESOURCING FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (SOF): SHOULD
RESPONSIBILITIES BE PASSED FROM USSOCOM BACK TO THE SERVICES?**

by

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
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| Report Documentation Page | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. | | | | | |
| 1. REPORT DATE 15 MAR 2006 | | 2. REPORT TYPE | | 3. DATES COVERED | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Resourcing for Special Operations Forces (SOF) Should Responsibilities Be Passed from USSOCOM Back to the Services | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) William Lane | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050 | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited. | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT See attached. | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 22 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT unclassified | b. ABSTRACT unclassified | c. THIS PAGE unclassified | | | |

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel William R. Lane

TITLE: Resourcing For Special Operations Forces (SOF): Should Responsibilities Be Passed From USSOCOM Back To The Services?

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 08 March 2006 WORD COUNT: 5710 PAGES: 21

KEY TERMS: Major Force Program-11 (MFP-11), Programs, SOF Programming

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The U.S. Code Title 10 responsibilities for resourcing special operations forces (SOF) was transferred from the service departments to U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) following the legislation mandating the creation of a unified combatant command for SOF and the establishment of USSOCOM. The Commander, USSOCOM is the only unified command commander levied with service-like resourcing responsibilities in addition to the normal Title 10 combatant commander responsibilities to be a primary warfighter. These additional resourcing responsibilities must still be accomplished within congressionally mandated Major Headquarters Activities ceilings and in an environment where USSOCOM is fully involved in the global war on terror as a supporting and supported command. This paper will examine whether the resourcing responsibility is a distraction for a unified command fighting the war on terrorism and if this shift in resourcing responsibility from the services is still necessary today. Finally, possible strategies and policy adjustments are examined as a means to reduce the risk of overburden associated with the dual responsibilities as a force provider and warfighter.

RESOURCING FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (SOF): SHOULD RESPONSIBILITIES BE PASSED FROM USSOCOM BACK TO THE SERVICES?

The current policy of separate resourcing and budget authority for special operations forces began with Public Law 99-661 enacted in November 1986. This law, commonly referred to as the Nunn-Cohen Amendment, called for a new unified command for special operations forces (SOF) and a new budget category and process for this new command.¹

This new command was established as US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) on 16 April 1987;² with the responsibility to “develop strategy, doctrine, and tactics; train assigned forces; conduct specialized courses of instruction...; validate requirements; establish priorities; ensure combat readiness; prepare budget requests...; and otherwise promote SOF professionalism. Additionally, CINCSOC was responsible for monitoring the preparedness of special operations forces assigned to other unified combatant commands.”³ In other words, USSOCOM was established primarily as a force provider with the service-like responsibilities to organize, train, and equip SOF worldwide.

In 2003 USSOCOM was designated as the lead command for fighting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).⁴ This lead role includes, “as the supported Commander, USSOCOM must synchronize DOD efforts...and focus SOF on the GWOT... to accomplish our main effort of attacking terrorist networks and enabling partner nations to do so in concert with us.”⁵ These new responsibilities focus USSOCOM as a primary “warfighting command” in the war on terrorism.⁶ This addition of the primary role for USSOCOM as a warfighting command has associated risks, in that USSOCOM is still a primary force provider. These competing responsibilities each provide the potential of distracting the command’s leadership and staff from its other responsibilities or diluting the command’s focus from the role as a primary warfighter.

This paper will investigate the policy of separate resourcing for special operations forces and the implications for U.S. Special Operations Command and the strategy in fighting the war on terrorism. Additionally it will evaluate the risks and costs associated with the current policy of separate resourcing and propose policy options or courses of action to mitigate these potential risks. Finally, this brief review will argue that separate resourcing for SOF has been essential in creating the world class special operations force we have today and that passing this responsibility back to the services would pose too great a long term risk to SOF and future SOF capability. Although possibly politically difficult, this paper will recommend an increase to USSOCOM’s Management Headquarters Activities ceiling and additional manpower to mitigate the risk associated with the dual roles of force provider and warfighter.

Background – Why Separate Resourcing For SOF?

In order to properly evaluate the available policy options, one must explore the circumstances and reasons for the current policy, determine if these circumstances and reasons still exist or are valid, and ensure lessons learned from past experience are incorporated into current policy alternatives. To that end we must start with an examination of the current policy and the circumstances and environment that drove the policy selection to begin with.

The special operations capability in the US Armed Forces reached a peak during the Vietnam War and played a prominent role in operations in Vietnam.⁷ After 1975 and in the defense drawdown of the post-Vietnam era, the services made dramatic cuts to the special operations force structure. These cuts included reducing nine Army Special Forces Groups to three, Navy SEAL units were cut to half strength, and many special operations aircraft were scheduled for deactivation.⁸ This represented a drop in funding for SOF to a level of about one-tenth of one percent of total DOD funding.⁹ Then Colonel, now Lt Gen William Boykin appropriately described this phenomenon by quoting Noel Koch, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for International Security Affairs, “The Traditional core will get funded first and foremost, then the programs that are peripheral to the individual services’ core interests, missions and traditions compete for the resources that are left. For the services, SOF has never been a core program.”¹⁰

In 1980, President Carter ordered the attempted rescue of American hostages held in Teheran, Iran. The rescue force was composed of an ad hoc conglomeration from all services and resulted in the failed rescue attempt. This highlighted the fact that special operations capability had eroded and could not be built back in a short time. In 1983, Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada highlighted problems with joint interoperability and the integration of SOF.¹¹ These problems led to “an overall lack of emphasis perceived by Congress in the Department of Defense on Low Intensity Conflict and counterterrorism.”¹² This perception, coupled with the services consistently moving funding from special operations forces to conventional force needs, led to frustration in the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate and prompted legislative action to correct the problems.¹³

The resulting legislation, the Nunn-Cohen Amendment, provided for a new Major Force Program (MFP)-11 for special operations to be overseen by a civilian Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC) and budget authority given to the new unified commander of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).¹⁴ This legislation created a service-like responsibility for the unified command to program and execute its own budget.¹⁵

This brief chronology clearly illustrates the primary reasons for the legislation and policy of separate resourcing for SOF, that the services had not maintained a special operations capability commensurate with the national need and that no single agency (service or unified commander) was vested with the responsibility to advocate, develop, and oversee the required joint capability for the entire Department of Defense. The policy for separate resourcing was part of the legislative prescription along with activating a 4-star SOF Combatant Command and creating a civilian oversight position in an ASD/SOLIC. These prescriptions sought to remedy the conditions that led to the dissolution of special operations capability throughout the 1970s.

Current Policy Considerations – What Are The Risks And Costs?

The current policy of separate resourcing is embedded in the current organizational structure of USSOCOM. The Center for Special Operations Requirements and Resources (SORR) (J8) performs a significant portion of the commands service-like resourcing responsibilities “through the development of resourcing, operational mission and force structure analysis, strategic assessments, and requirements reviews.”¹⁶ This organizational structure contains both the functions of program analysis and program integration, which are normally only seen on the service staffs and in the OSD staff.¹⁷ USSOCOM's 2003 posture statement outlines the uniqueness and advantage of these embedded functions, stating that “informed SOF resourcing decisions are based on analyses of comprehensive, joint SOF data that balance the competing requirements for all SOF. This facilitates the development of and ensures a focus on effective Joint SOF capability for Combatant Commanders, which was nearly impossible when SOF capability was the product of separate disjointed military department efforts.”¹⁸

This uniqueness is offset by the costs of additional headquarters manpower dedicated toward resourcing, acquisitions and programming functions. When USSOCOM was established at MacDill AFB in 1987, it was activated from the manpower remnants of U.S. Readiness Command (USREDCOM), which had its responsibilities transferred to “U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Transportation Command, and Forces Command.”¹⁹ No manpower was transferred from the planning and programming staffs or functions within services, which had previously performed the resourcing functions for special operations forces within each service department. This unique capability to perform the strategic planning and programming functions along with the process of resource allocation for all of SOF had to be grown within the new command. USSOCOM was initially activated with a total headquarters staff of about 1,100 which included the three component commands²⁰, Naval

Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM), U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), and Headquarters, 23rd Air Force which later became Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC).

An additional policy consideration is the congressionally mandated ceilings on Major Headquarters Activities (MHA). These ceilings were instituted with the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act in 1986 and additional legislative reductions continued through the 1980s and 1990s, with the latest reductions and ceilings mandated through the FY2002 budget cycle.²¹ USSOCOM authorized MHA ceiling peaked at 1,843 in FY1999, which is also the baseline for the latest round of mandated reductions extending through FY2003. The latest published MHA authorization for USSOCOM is 1,787 in FY2003 and this authorization includes the USSOCOM Headquarters as well as the subordinate component headquarters, USASOC, AFSOC, and NAVSPECWARCOM.²² These MHA ceilings are significant for any considered policy changes due to the fact that headquarters manpower is a zero sum game within the Department of Defense. The total MHA authorizations and ceilings are mandated in existing laws and would require a legislative change to increase. Any increase in MHA authorizations in one area must be offset by reductions in another, short of changes to the law. Further complicating matters is the fact that the department had requested repeal of the latest round of cuts in 2000 because additional reductions will “engender serious readiness risks” and “impede our ability to meet the operational demands of theater commanders.”²³ The briefings furnished to Senate Armed Service Committee (SASC) Staff the previous year in 1999 indicated further reductions would be harmful and that headquarters functions, responsibilities, and workload had not decreased commensurate with the projected reductions.²⁴ The obvious implication for USSOCOM is that MHA authorizations for DoD are already cut to the minimum and fulfilling USSOCOM's additional warfighter responsibilities without an increase in major headquarters authorizations for DoD would mean reducing authorizations in other areas of the department to meet the new responsibility. The only other alternative would be to obtain additional MHA authorizations through legislative changes to the existing MHA ceilings.

As indicated earlier, USSOCOM was designated as the lead command for the GWOT in early 2003. This prompted the command to change the organizational structure to incorporate the warfighting responsibility. In May 2003, USSOCOM created the Center for Special Operations (SCSO) incorporating the functions of the J2, J3, and J5 to fulfill the responsibilities of a force provider as well as a “GWOT warfighting cell.”²⁵ These dual responsibilities were first reflected in the command's 2003 posture statement as shown below in Figure 1. Previous posture statements showed similar organizational diagrams, but with the focus of the entire

command in an arrow indicating support to other Combatant Commanders, Ambassadors, and Theater Special Operations Commands.²⁶ In other words, the command's primary focus was toward being a force provider with Title 10 responsibilities to organize, train, and equip.

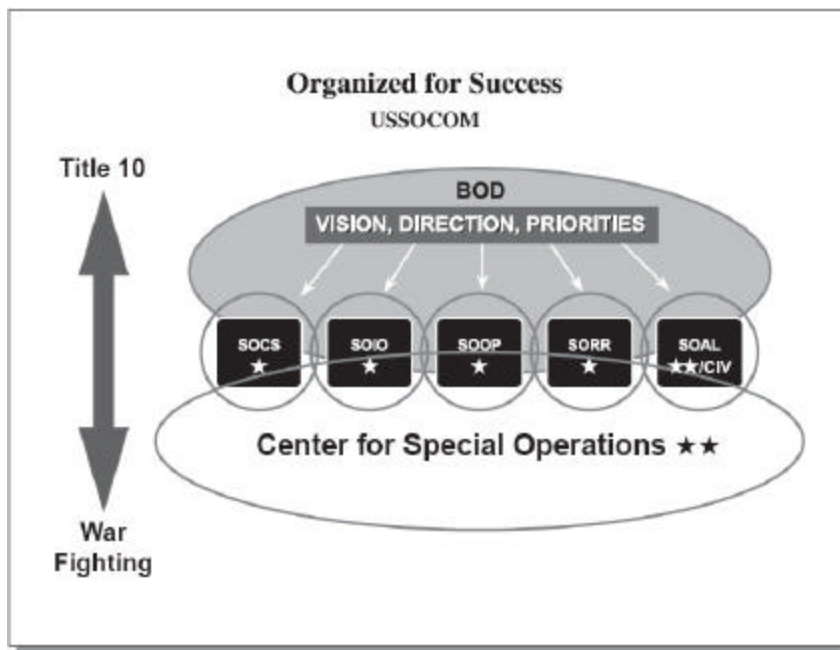


Figure 1.²⁷

The new dual responsibility role reflected in Figure 1 is unique in the Department of Defense. The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act specifically separated the responsibilities to organize, train and equip forces from the responsibilities for planning and executing operations. In essence, the services (force providers) were removed from the operational aspect of military advice to the NCA and the chain of command. As noted in the Phase 2 report from *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, the act gave Combatant Commanders responsibility for operations and "clear authorities for planning and conducting assigned missions."²⁸ However, the report also noted that "the COCOMs' role in the requirements and acquisition process is still insufficient," indicating that an expanded role for the COCOMs' in resourcing capabilities was warranted.²⁹

This duality of roles for USSOCOM presents a dichotomous focus for the command and for the leadership. Is the primary role and mission of USSOCOM as a warfighter or is it as a force provider? These two roles are generally mutually exclusive and certainly provide one of

the greatest risks for this new dual responsibility role, with Title 10 responsibilities pulling focus in one direction and warfighting responsibilities pulling focus in another.

The final consideration is that of actual results of the current policy. USSOCOM first exercised program budget authority for MFP-11 with the submission of the FY1991 President's Budget request. Even by 1994, SOF readiness levels were much improved. John Collins, in his 1994 assessment stated, "Better arms, equipment, personnel, and integrating structures are evident everywhere in USSOCOM and among Special Operations Forces in all overseas unified commands."³⁰ Additionally, AFSOF aircraft inventories had grown from 86 in 1986 to 130 by 1993.³¹ The SOF force structure at that time had grown to a total of about 44,000.³² By FY1999, the SOF Force structure had grown to just over 46,000 and the budget request of \$3.4 billion represented approximately 1.3 percent of the total DoD budget.³³ The SOF force structure had stabilized at about this level through 2001, with the end strength just under 46,000 and a FY2001 budget request of \$3.7 billion again representing 1.3 percent of the total DoD budget.³⁴ After 9/11 and the designation of USSOCOM as the lead in the GWOT, SOF funding and force structure expanded significantly. In the FY2006 budget request, the planned end strength will be at just over 52,000 and the funding request for \$6.5 billion represents a growth to 1.6 percent of the total DoD budget.³⁵

Although this resourcing results picture looks rosy, then Colonel Boykin highlighted a potential negative impact or risk of MFP-11 funding for SOF. The negative impact noted was that, before MFP-11, SOF requirements competed in the larger pool of service funding which always seemed to have unobligated funds looking for a suitable home. This translated into many SOF requirements being filled using this method. Since the institution of MFP-11, the services recognize USSOCOM as a budget authority with service-like responsibilities and as such, expect SOF requirements will be filled exclusively from the MFP-11 funding pool.³⁶ This noted phenomenon also means that SOF requirements compete exclusively against other SOF requirements in the relatively small pool of MFP-11 obligation authority. Also unknown are the results that would have been obtained solely by the 4-star Unified Command and ASD/SOLIC advocacy without the benefit of MFP-11 budget authority.

Other risks associated with separate resourcing for SOF were also highlighted in an interview with Mr. Scott Stephens, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Force Application in the Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. First of these risks noted was a "culture and predisposition" within USSOCOM to program only for the short term without a longer term vision. Mr. Stephens attributed this predisposition, at least in part, to the competition between the responsibilities of a combatant

commander (warfighter) and service-like responsibilities (as a force provider) to organize, train, and equip. Second, it was noted that major weapon system acquisition and sustainment for SOF has had a less than stellar track record. This challenge results from competition within the SOF joint community between expensive major weapon systems and numerous smaller projects and initiatives of equal importance. Mr. Stephens described this as a competition where “ten \$1M projects will win out over one \$10M project every time,” resulting in a “debilitating effect on major systems as neglect piles up and makes their needs even more expensive.”³⁷ These risks seem minor overall when viewing SOF resourcing authorities and MFP-11 results in total. As Mr. Stephens noted, “my gut on this...after 18 years of experience with MFP-11...we have this right...” and USSOCOM and the services have the authority to address the shortcomings in SOF resourcing, if they “understand the need to do so.”³⁸

A final risk to ponder is the risk associated with significant additional responsibilities as a warfighting (supported) command and adequate manpower to appropriately resource these new responsibilities along with maintaining all the Title 10 force provider responsibilities in an environment where the command is growing significantly over the short term. USSOCOM will be growing by leaps and bounds in the next few years with the addition of a 2600-man Marine component³⁹, 2,300 additional SEALs and Army Special Forces soldiers⁴⁰, 3,700 additional Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs personnel, and a new SOF unmanned aerial vehicle squadron.⁴¹ As General Brown noted in his recent JFQ article, “the Center for Special Operations was created primarily to prosecute the war on terror” and meet USSOCOM’s dual mission (force provider and warfighter).⁴² This warfighting function was created primarily through a reorganization of the headquarters with “minimal growth” in manpower.⁴³ Even this small growth in headquarters manpower would count against the department’s MHA ceilings rooted in Title 10 legislation. Mr. Ron Rhoads, USSOCOM’s Manpower Division Chief, noted that OSD has not held USSOCOM to the MHA manpower ceilings in the last couple of years. He also noted that there had been modest increases in the headquarters with the creation of the Center for Special Operations and the other growth within the SOF force structure in general.⁴⁴ The inference here is that OSD will increase the MHA ceiling for USSOCOM once the ceilings are again enforced. This assumption could be problematic in the future—only time will tell the eventual makeup of MHA allocations in USSOCOM, across the services, and within the department.

As to the question, should the current policy be changed? The answer must be considered by evaluating available policy options and weighing the risks associated with those policy options against the risks associated with the current policies. Certainly there are risks

associated with the dual responsibilities of resourcing SOF and acting as the SOF force provider. However, there are also risks associated with passing the resourcing responsibility back to the services. The question of whether to change the policy is probably best answered by evaluating policy options to reduce or mitigate the risks against the risks of the status quo. Now that all the policy considerations of limited headquarters authorizations, dual responsibility focus, redundant headquarters manpower and results for SOF are in focus, it's time to articulate and evaluate alternative policy options.

Alternative Policy Options – How Can The Risks Be Mitigated?

With the framework laid for the desired policy goal—adequate resourcing and advocacy for special operations capability and meeting all the warfighter responsibilities for the GWOT, one can explore policy options that may meet the policy goal and mitigate the potential risks highlighted above.

Each of these policy options should be viewed in terms of ends, ways, and means with each option evaluated for feasibility, acceptability, and suitability. This evaluation should answer these basic questions: feasibility (Can the policy goals or ends be achieved with the means available?); acceptability (Are the costs for the strategy or option justified?); and finally suitability (Can the strategy or option achieve the desired effect or end?).⁴⁵

Option 1 – Return full resourcing responsibility to the services. The first policy option to explore is to return full Title 10 resourcing responsibility for SOF back to the services. This would entail reversing the legislation giving budget authority to USSOCOM. This option would allow the USSOCOM leadership and staff to focus solely on the GWOT—one of the nations top priorities.⁴⁶ Additionally, removing responsibility for the resourcing function would allow headquarters manpower authorizations to be applied to the functions of the unified command in a warfighting role. Clearly this policy option proposes to mitigate the risks associated with inefficient use of limited headquarters manpower authorizations and the loss of focus on the primary mission—the GWOT. The stated policy goal to maintain advocacy and oversight of SOF capabilities would have to be filled by continuing the roles of ASD/SOLIC as the civilian overseer and USSOCOM as the SOF unified combatant command. Additionally, SOF requirements would still be vetted through USSOCOM and passed to the services for resourcing—just as the other unified combatant commanders compete to have their top priorities and requirements met in the current DoD resourcing system. However, this policy option comes with significant other risks of its own. The greatest risk for this option is that of a return to the service resourcing priorities of the past where SOF funding was cut in favor of

conventional force programs. We can't forget the warning of Noel Koch, former DASD, that SOF programs have never been in the "traditional core" for the services and would remain on the periphery.⁴⁷ This risk would certainly be mitigated in the short term since SOF and USSOCOM are the lead for the GWOT and are receiving unprecedented attention for that increase in responsibility. SOF are experiencing unprecedented recognition and resourcing as evidenced by the almost 13 percent growth in force structure and the increase in annual obligation authority from \$3.7 billion to \$6.5 billion from the pre-9/11 FY2001 budget to the FY06 budget.⁴⁸

This first option, to return full Title 10 resourcing responsibility for SOF to the services, proposes no change to the overall resources or means employed by the department. However, this option proposes a change to the method of applying the means or ways to achieve the ends. In this case, this option appears to fall short in the acceptability and suitability tests. Acceptability is questionable because of the increased risk (or cost) to the future viability of SOF that would most certainly be at risk in the long term. This option fails the suitability test because the stated policy goal to maintain a credible, capable joint SOF capability into the future comes into question without any resourcing authority separate from the service departments.

General Brown noted in his recent JFQ article that the authorities assigned to USSOCOM, specifically program and budget authority among others, has led to a profound impact on special operations capabilities. "USSOCOM has galvanized all joint Special Operations capabilities into a world-class force with the skill to execute the most challenging missions. The command has been willing to utilize these authorities to continuously reevaluate the SOF mission, force structure, organization, and virtually every aspect of the USSOCOM construct, and to change where necessary to meet the latest threat."⁴⁹

Colonel Brendan Clare, USSOCOM Assessment Director for the Fixed Wing Assessment Area, noted the Air Force's capability focus is generally toward the high end major combat operations (MCO) end of the spectrum and that SOF requirements to modify and deliver specialized platforms for specific mission sets don't match very well with overall Air Force focus. He opines this mismatch would absolutely lead to a decrease in investment resources for SOF unique mobility programs which would be turned over to the Air Force in this option.⁵⁰

The current USSOCOM Senior Assessment Director, Colonel James L. Dunn, concluded that if SOF resourcing responsibility were returned to the services, their conventional force priorities would take much of the focus and resources and that "service priorities would eventually result in a decrease in resources for SOF."⁵¹

Option 2 – Services budget for SOF; CDR, USSOCOM maintains approval authority. A second policy option available is a partial shift of resourcing responsibility for SOF back to the services. This option requires some explanation. As noted by General Brown in his latest annual report, separate resourcing for SOF, specifically acquisition authority has been essential to making “today’s world-class SOF team.”⁵² This option would maintain a separate ultimate approval authority for the USSOCOM Combatant Commander and maintain the legal mandate for MFP-11. However, the nuts and bolts work of programming MFP-11 and executing the funding would be primarily accomplished through service channels by the USSOCOM component commands. The Commander, USSOCOM would still approve the SOF MFP-11 program objective memorandum (POM) and budget submissions to OSD, but most of the work would be accomplished on the service staffs and the USSOCOM component staffs. Each of the SOF service components’ O&M and pay funding would be in the respective service POMs, but the program elements would remain in MFP-11 and thus segregated from the remainder of the services’ funding. Investment programs (RDT&E and procurement funding) would be handled in a similar manner, with each SOF components’ investment programs or portions thereof in their respective service POM, but identified with a MFP-11 program element code to segregate SOF funding from other service funding. This modified policy option allows easy congressional oversight of SOF funding, as well as preserving total SOF funding authority without fear of the services shifting funding from MFP-11 to conventional programs. Equally mitigated are the risks of inefficient use of headquarters manpower and the distraction from the command’s new primary mission—lead in fighting the GWOT. This policy option is not unprecedented. The MFP-11 funding accounts (program elements) were created and funding cross-walked from the services in the late 1980s before USSOCOM had grown the capability produce its own POM for submission to OSD. After the crosswalk of funding into MFP-11, the service staffs completed the first MFP-11 POMs as part of their submissions to OSD. USSOCOM took over that responsibility and completed its first POM with the FY1991 budget cycle.⁵³

This second option, a partial transfer of resourcing responsibility and functions to the services with ultimate approval by the USSOCOM Commander, also proposes no change to the overall resources or means employed. Again, only a change to the method of applying the means or ways to achieve the ends is proposed. This option most probably passes the acceptability and feasibility tests, as the policy goals could be met without significant change in costs. However, the suitability test falls short for this option. While the overall policy goals might be met with this option, the primary goal to mitigate risk and save manpower by transferring workload to the services most likely could not be achieved.

The manpower savings attributable to transferring programming workload to the services are negligible and in fact may be a cost vice a savings. Approximately 45 positions are attributed directly to the POMing function with a few others indirectly supporting the function. If the programming function were transferred to the service departments with ultimate approval authority vested with the USSOCOM Commander, additional workload requirements would be generated for the USSOCOM staff. A requirement would exist to create liaison positions with each of the service staffs and for the USSOCOM staff to evaluate the program content and work preformed by the services to determine if SOF requirements were being fulfilled.⁵⁴ In other words much of the program evaluation work now preformed on the USSOCOM staff would continue and the additional requirement to monitor the work accomplished by the service staffs would more than offset any savings generated by transferring the program integration workload. Additionally the POM and budget approval processes as they currently exist with Board of Directors meetings and briefings most probably would be required to provide an informed decision making process for the commander.⁵⁵

While this option at first glance would seem to mitigate some of the risks of dual force provider and warfighter responsibilities, the ultimate outcome would preclude any risk mitigation because of the additional workload requirements generated by the transfer. Additionally this option would require a resourcing approach where each of the USSOCOM components requirements are addressed separately by each service department. This approach would be a step back from the joint SOF capability analysis and program integration that exists under the current processes within the command.⁵⁶

Option 3 – Status Quo with headquarters manpower increase. The third option to consider is to maintain the separate MFP-11 resourcing and programming functions within the USSOCOM staff headquarters as they exist today. However, to mitigate the risk of distraction from the new primary mission to fight the GWOT, this option would increase the USSOCOM headquarters manpower and correspondingly increase the USSOCOM MHA ceiling to an appropriate level required to prosecute the GWOT, without transferring resources from other areas within the existing headquarters structure. Additionally, the force provider function should be separated from the function to plan, coordinate, and execute the GWOT—the primary warfighting function. This option mitigates the risk of distraction from the primary mission by applying additional resources (means) to handle both the functions of force provider and warfighter adequately. Since MHA ceilings are capped by law (US Code, Title 10, Chapter 3, Section 130a) for the department, significant resistance to this change might be expected from the services if their MHA ceilings are reduced to offset the increase for USSOCOM.⁵⁷ The

remaining risk involved in this option is the political willingness to increase the MHA ceilings and increase the manpower for USSOCOM Headquarters. There is also inherent additional risk in this option for other portions of the department. The MHA increases for USSOCOM could be expected to be offset by reductions elsewhere within the department. This again poses the risk of inefficient use of headquarters manpower, not so much for USSOCOM, but for the Department of Defense in general.

The third option, proposes to maintain the current resourcing relationships, however, increase the resources (means) by increasing the headquarters manpower for USSOCOM and increasing the MHA authorization. This option poses a change only to the means employed. The desired ends and ways remain unchanged. The suitability and feasibility tests pass with flying colors—the strategy can achieve the desired effects and can be accomplished with the additional means added. The only area in question is the acceptability of this option in light of the requirement for additional MHA authorizations and manpower (additional costs), which most probably would be offset from other areas in the department. The risk associated with obtaining the additional manpower and MHA authorizations seems fairly small in light of the recent QDR increases for SOF and the already planned SOF expansions previously highlighted. The additional manpower used to create the new warfighting Center for Special Operations within USSOCOM was obviously carved from the already planned growth in SOF manpower. The only remaining question is that of increased MHA ceilings--and that would seem a foregone conclusion with the already added responsibility of supported command given to USSOCOM and the planned additional force structure growth. This option is clearly feasible, suitable, and acceptable by meeting the required policy goals with the planned means available and at a cost that is justified (relatively small increase in MHA ceiling).

Option 4 – Status Quo. The fourth and final policy option is to maintain the status quo. This option would maintain separate resourcing for SOF and accept all the risks previously highlighted and associated with the dual responsibilities of force provider and warfighter. The primary risk of concern with the status quo is the risk to the prosecution of the GWOT. The risk of inefficient use of MHA manpower has been accepted as a fact of life for the department since the inception of the SOF unified command with separate resourcing. The additional risk with this option presents itself in the enforcement of the latest published MHA ceilings for USSOCOM. An enforcement of previous MHA ceilings would result in a decrease to the current headquarters manpower, specifically those positions needed to stand up the Center for Special Operations, the warfighting function within USSOCOM. This reduction could result in a situation where the headquarters is inadequately staffed to perform the required functions of both force

provider and warfighter. Although this risk may seem relatively low in the short term, it could lead to a difficult balance for the command between inadequately resourcing either the force provider responsibility or the warfighting responsibility. This final option proposes no change to the desired ends, ways used or means employed and would accept any risks associated with the current policy. This option would fall short in the feasibility area in that the desired ends could not adequately be achieved with the means available if the MHA ceilings are enforced on USSOCOM. Without an increase in resources or a change in the ways (methods employed), the current policy maintains the risk of splitting the USSOCOM staff between the two primary functions of force provider and warfighter.

Conclusions and Recommendations.

Any policy recommendation has to be viewed in terms of the organizational needs one is trying to satisfy. In this case, as a dedicated SOF warrior, these recommendations are those most likely and prudent to be pursued by USSOCOM to meet its needs within the context of the current DoD environment.

The first and most obvious conclusion is that removing or adjusting separate resourcing for SOF would not benefit the maintenance of joint SOF capabilities required by the nation. The world-class special operations capabilities built over the last 20 years have been the result of the separate acquisition and budget authority vested in the USSOCOM Combatant Commander. The first two options evaluated above would dilute this authority and pose serious risks for the future health of the SOF capabilities that exist today. Although these options would seek to reduce the risk associated with the dual responsibilities of force provider and warfighter, the ultimate result would be a less capable SOF community and a far greater risk than the risk sought to mitigate.

The second obvious conclusion from this evaluation is that the initial legislation initiating separate resourcing for SOF placed USSOCOM in the primary role as a force provider—unique for a combatant command. This primary role as a force provider places additional risks on the combatant commander in the role as a warfighter, especially without a significant increase in resources intended to adequately address both roles for the command. The dual roles for the combatant commander create competing areas of focus such as the pull between resourcing the short term fight and the long term health of the force highlighted by Mr. Scott Stephens. A combatant commander's need to apply resources to the fight on the battlefield competes with the need for a long term focus to resource the future fight beyond the current threat. This risk,

the competition between short and long term, is not the primary focus on this paper, but can and should be addressed within the command's strategic planning process (SPP).⁵⁸

The question remains: how great is the risk associated with this dual role competition and should anything be changed? From a strict ends, ways, and means point of view, an increase in the workload and responsibilities for the command would require an increase in the means employed or a decrease in the expected ends. Since the desired ends (effective prosecution of the GWOT and maintaining a capable SOF) have not changed, the only remaining viable option to mitigate the risk is an increase in manpower and MHA to adequately discharge the assigned responsibilities.

Bottom line recommendation: USSOCOM should pursue Option 3, headquarters manpower and MHA increase, as the primary solution to mitigate the risk to prosecuting the GWOT. The added responsibilities associated with the dual roles as warfighter and force provider should be adequately resourced by the department (most probably from within the already planned SOF expansion). The associated MHA ceilings for USSOCOM should also be increased to allow for the modest growth required to match the added responsibilities.

Endnotes

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⁵⁰ Colonel Brendan Clare, USSOCOM Fixed-Wing Assessment Director, interview by the author, 13 February 2006. Colonel Clare has been a USSOCOM Assessment Director for the last 2 POM cycles and for the previous 3 years served as the Chief, Special Operations Division on the Air Staff responsible for oversight of Air Force Special Operations programs, capabilities and forces.

⁵¹ Colonel James L. Dunn, USSOCOM Senior Assessment Director, interview by author, 12 February 2006. Colonel Dunn has significant recent background in SOF resourcing including the last 2 POM cycles in his current position and the previous 3 years as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8 at U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC).

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